



DROUGHT²⁰⁰⁸

Why are we in a drought?

Snowpack, precipitation, and reservoir storage are several indicators commonly used to evaluate California water conditions. Water year 2007 was a dry year statewide, especially in Central and Southern California. In Northern and Central California, unimpaired runoff from Sierra Nevada watersheds was below average. The Colorado River Basin, an important source of water supply for Southern California, continued in drought conditions, having experienced below average runoff in seven of the last eight years.

Other drought factors

- Water supplies for customers of the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project will be affected by limitations on diversions from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to protect the Delta smelt.
- Those rules are expected to reduce water deliveries by as much as 30 percent this year to 25 million Californians.
- Efforts to capture water this year were hampered by lack of spring rain, and sublimation of some mountain snowpack that provides water supply.
- The State's major reservoirs are at 30-50 percent of their capacity at a time when they ideally would be at about 60 percent of capacity.
- Runoff into California rivers was at 55 percent of normal on May 1, with the water



Low water levels at Folsom Lake have left swimming beaches like Beals Point high and dry.

year forecast runoff at 57 percent of normal. Numerous California communities now are being forced to mandate water conservation or rationing.

- An eight-year drought in the Southwest means California can't depend on Colorado River water to help supply Southern California. And a federal judge's order last year requires that more Northern California water be left in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to aid declining fish populations.
- Runoff indices for the Sacramento & San Joaquin River systems — the source of much of California's developed water supply — are forecasted to be classified as "critical" for the Sacramento River at the 50% exceedance level and "critical" for the San Joaquin River at the 75% exceedance level.